

**SCALPEL—Men Who Made Surgery—**Agatha Young. Random House, New York, 1956. 331 pages, \$5.00.

This fascinating book on medical history written by a laywoman for laymen provides entrancing reading for members of the profession she describes so vividly, so frankly, but withal most sympathetically. To be sure, some of the portrayals concern themselves more with the intimate details of the personal eccentricities and peculiarities of her subjects than with their scientific contributions—no doubt quite acceptable to the layreader but somewhat disappointing to the scientist. The book's lively interest, however, lies not only in the development of techniques, but also in the very colorful descriptions of the manners and mores of the people at the times when her heroes lived. In the days of Vesalius, Paré, Harvey and Hunter, yet unborn were those twin marvels of modern civilization, unlimited water supply and sanitary sewage disposal, which today make living even in cities of 6,000,000 people a matter of miraculous bodily comfort and unassailed special senses. As one reads her pictures of primitive living and primitive passions one can hardly credit the appalling filth and stench that assailed one's nostrils from the streets, hospitals, houses, and even from the bodies of human beings that characterized the cities and towns of the Sixteenth Century. Difficult to understand also is the savage and inhuman cruelty of the religious bigots responsible for the massacre on St. Bartholomew's Eve, the intimate details of which the author presents in vivid fashion. The conditions prevailing in the hospitals and anatomical laboratories of the time must have discouraged many of tender feelings from pursuing the profession of medicine.

The reader of this book will be amply repaid in a better understanding of the development of anesthesia, of antiseptis and a sepsis, of the control of hemorrhage, and of the development of safe and sane operating which has made possible the truly great triumphs in the surgery of the present day. The pioneers responsible for these developments deserve our unlimited admiration for their courage and persistence in the face of the stubborn opposition of blind ignorance that impeded their progress at every turn.

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**TREATMENT OF HEART DISEASE—A Clinical Physiologic Approach—**Harry Gross, M.D., F.A.C.P. and Abraham Jexer, M.D., both Assistant Clinical Professors of Medicine, Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons, W. B. Saunders Company, Philadelphia, 1956. 549 pages, 91 figures, \$13.00.

This book on the treatment of heart disease is primarily a textbook of cardiology with more emphasis on treatment than in the average text. The authors are clinical cardiologists who have compiled existing knowledge of heart disease into a readable, practical discussion of the subject. They have not introduced any new concepts nor do they present any original data. The sections on digitalis, quinidine, the arrhythmias and congestive heart failure are particularly complete and the bibliography at the end of each chapter is current and valuable.

The authors offer a good section on surgery and the cardiac patient, a discussion of emotions, rehabilitation, a chapter on "Living With a Sick Heart," and an appendix dealing with diets, recipes, and a table of the sodium and potassium content of various foods. These last are most helpful and reveal the authors' long experience with cardiac patients. The book will prove a useful addition to the cardiac literature but it is doubtful that it will replace the existing texts by Friedberg, White and Wood. It is recommended to physicians as an up-to-date appraisal of cardiology by experienced clinicians whose emphasis is eminently practical but, at the same time, correlates physiological concepts as the basis for the various forms of treatment.

**THE RECOVERY ROOM—Immediate Postoperative Management—**Max S. Sadove, M.D., Professor of Surgery (Anesthesia); and James H. Cross, M.D., Clinical Assistant Professor of Surgery; both of the University of Illinois College of Medicine; with contributions by 24 authors. W. B. Saunders Company, Philadelphia, 1956. 597 pages, \$12.00.

The postoperative recovery room has become a very essential part of the modern hospital. Doctors Sadove and Cross present an exhaustive review of all aspects of recovery room activity, including design and equipment, staffing, management and operational policies. However, the discussion goes beyond the actual physical setup of this area, and covers all phases of management of the severely ill patient, pre-operative and nonoperative as well as postoperative. In the authors' concept, the "recovery room" becomes an intensive therapy unit in which all critically ill patients can receive specialized and personalized care.

The recovery or intensive therapy room is discussed from the standpoint of all concerned—the building committee, hospital administration, anesthesiologist, nursing personnel as well as the physicians of the various specialties whose patients come under the care of the unit.

The chapter entitled "Principles of Recovery Room Management" discusses pain and its control, analgesics, hypnotics and antibiotics that may need to be administered in the intensive therapy unit, and methods of administration. Other chapters deal with the problems of circulatory, respiratory and nutritional complications; postoperative care of the patient of the various surgical specialties; management of medical problems; and nursing care.

The authors, with contributions by 24 other specialists, have assembled a comprehensive volume that covers the subject exhaustively. It is well written and is a must reading for hospital personnel contemplating the set-up of an intensive therapy unit, or the reorganization of one already existing. The book also contains information of value to general practitioners, surgeons, internists, anesthesiologists, and nurses. It should make a valuable addition to libraries of nursing schools, hospitals, residency training programs and the individual physician.

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**DISEASES OF THE NOSE, THROAT AND EAR—A Handbook for Students and Practitioners—Sixth Edition—**I. Simon Hall, M.B., Sh.B., F.R.C.P.E., F.R.C.S.E., Surgeon to Royal Infirmary, Edinburgh. E. & S. Livingstone, Ltd., Edinburgh. Distributed in U.S.A. by The Williams and Wilkins Company, Baltimore, 1956. 463 pages, \$4.75.

The prospective purchaser of this volume should know of the author's statement under the heading of "Preface to Sixth Edition." This statement reads: "Since the publication of the Fifth Edition, there have been few major changes in management of this specialty. There are, however, certain trends and, where possible, these are reflected in changes in the text. Considerable trouble has been taken to avoid enlargement of the book and it remains the same size as in previous editions."

For those who have not had an opportunity to see and read the previous editions, I would strongly recommend that they procure this Sixth Edition. It is a charming compilation of important facts, and singularly free of unnecessary fancies.

The method of presentation is concise, direct, and easily followed. For the American, certain of the phraseology is delightful, and, by and large, terms not familiar to both sides of the Atlantic and which could be misconstrued have been eliminated.

The size of the book is definitely misleading. It seems almost impossible that such a small sized volume could contain such worthwhile fundamental background and current information. This volume should be in the presence of, or accessible to, every practicing otolaryngologist.